

World Trade Situation and Policy Updates

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Blocks Imports of Mexican Cantaloupes

On October 28, 2002, the FDA issued an import alert advising officials at U.S. ports to detain cantaloupes from Mexico without physical examination. The alert was a result of unsanitary conditions in the cantaloupe growing and packing facilities in Mexico causing four Salmonellosis outbreaks during the past 3 years in the United States. FDA sampling found that some imported cantaloupes from most growing regions in Mexico tested positive for Salmonella. The October 28 import alert expands the prior warnings that targeted specific shippers and growers whose products were linked to outbreaks or tested positive for Salmonella. Trade sources estimate that the FDA action could result in losses amounting to at least \$4 to \$6 million per month if the situation is not resolved expeditiously. U.S. imports of cantaloupe from Mexico were valued at \$46.4 million in CY2001. Cantaloupe imports from Mexico tend to ramp up in November, and peak during the period March-May.

USDA Announced Availability of Pest Risk Assessment for the Imports of Unshu Oranges from Korea

On November 4, 2002, USDA announced that they had prepared a pest risk assessment (PRA) for the importation of unshu oranges from Korea into U.S. citrus-producing states. Currently, unshu oranges from Korea are allowed in the United States/areas except for American Samoa, Arizona, California, Florida, Louisiana, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Korean officials had, for a number of years, sought to gain access to the other U.S. states. Reports indicate that there is a niche market for unshus, especially in California, where a large number of Koreans live. In order to be considered, any comments to USDA's PRA need to be received on or before January 6, 2003.

Washington's Increased Production of Non-Traditional Apple Varieties to Boost Demand

The 2002/03 Washington apple crop is expected to continue to shift away from the traditional and widely grown Red and Golden Delicious varieties. The enhanced mix of varieties, combined with a larger crop and lower carry-in supplies from last season will more than likely boost the state's apple sales and improve the situation of the domestic industry. In response to changes in U.S. consumer preferences, apple growers in Washington increased planting of non-traditional varieties including Fuji, Gala, Pink Lady, McIntosh, Empire, Cameo, and Braeburn. U.S. exports, which in 2001/02 totaled nearly \$370 million, could also benefit from the changing variety production trends. About 40 percent of U.S. annual apple exports are shipped to Latin America. Asia accounts for about 35 percent, and the Middle East and Europe for about 5 percent each. Canada alone accounts for about 15 percent of U.S. annual apple shipments.